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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004376

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ALLAWI AIMING FOR SIZE OVER SUBSTANCE IN  
COALITION NEGOTIATIONS

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford  
Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: With coalition negotiations entering their final four days, former Prime Minister Allawi appears to have opted for size over substance in forming his slate. He has pulled together a moderate -- but not clearly liberal -- coalition including Ghazi al-Yawar's party, the Iraqi Communist Party, and several smaller Islamist, nationalist, and minority groups. He appears to have failed to convince major Sunni Arab groups to join his coalition or to persuade major Shia Islamist leaders to break with theirs. He has also, perhaps inevitably, alienated some liberal politicians who insisted on a tighter coalition with a clearer, shared vision.

2. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT CONTINUED: The breadth of Allawi's coalition appears to have scared the Shia Islamists into feverish and continuing negotiations to preserve the United Iraqi Alliance. Allawi is clearly counting on amassing strength in numbers and must be hoping that Grand Ayatollah Sistani abstains from specific party endorsements in this vote. He is also banking that promises of post-election support from Sunni Arab politicians will propel him to the prime ministership even if his is not the largest bloc in the next parliament. Much of the hurried negotiating is not finished, and we can expect more political alliance twists and turns before the October 28 election list filing deadline. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

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A Polyglot Coalition  
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3. (C) Wael Abd al-Latif, a former judge and TNA member, told PolOff October 24 that Allawi has made major strides in pulling together a diverse coalition that includes Shia, Sunni Arab, Islamists, minorities, and nationalists. Latif insisted that Allawi was still working to convince the Sunni Arab Iraqi Islamic Party and Adnan al-Duleimi's "Iraqi Conference" to join the fold. Top Allawi confidante and TNA member Rasim al-Awadi told PolOff October 24 that negotiations are ongoing, but the slate currently includes the following key groups and leaders:

- Iraqi National Accord (Wifaq)
- Iraqi Communist Party
- Vice President Ghazi al-Yawar's Iraqiyyoon list
- Arab Socialist Movement leader Abd al-Ilah Nasrawi
- Yunadam Kanna's Assyrian Democratic Front
- Sabeian Mandaean leaders
- Da'wa Islamic Movement (a splinter of the Da'wa Party in Basra)
- TNA Speaker Hachim al-Hasani
- Basra religious leader Shaykh Khayrallah al-Basri

4. (C) Allawi's success has produced a counter-reaction from the Shia Islamist bloc, Latif acknowledged. The Islamists appear determined to recreate the United Iraqi Alliance in the face of Allawi's coalition, he said. Latif predicted that the Shia Islamists would succeed in that effort despite Allawi's efforts to draw away the Fadila (Islamic Virtue) Party. He insisted, however, that even Grand Ayatollah Sistani's backing would not offer the boost in this election that it did in the last one.

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Sunni Arab Bloc Aligned  
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5. (C) Leading Sunni Arab parties appear aligned in a coalition to be entitled the "National Consensus Front." The coalition includes the Iraqi Islamic Party, National Dialogue Council, and Adnan Duleimi's Conference of the Iraqi People, previously known as the Sunni Conference. National Dialogue Council Secretary General Abd al-Nasser al-Janabi told PolOff

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October 23 that Salah Mutlak had not really broken with the Dialogue Council despite his public announcements to the contrary.

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One Sunni Leaders Stays Solo  
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16. (C) Liberation and Reconciliation Bloc Leader Mish'an Jaburi, who won a single TNA seat in the January elections, told PolOff October 23 that he would run independently in the coming elections. He said he had rejected entreaties from the Iraqi Islamic Party to join the larger Sunni coalition because he did not consider the grouping liberal enough. He also said he rejected offers from Ayad Allawi because of political differences that he would not specify. Jaburi said he had assured Allawi that he would support him in the next parliament. Jaburi briefly served as governor of Mosul in 2003 but is a native of Salah al-Din. He said he plans to run lists in Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Basra, Anbar, and Kirkuk.

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A Smaller Liberal Slate In the Works  
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17. (C) Several smaller liberal, democratic figures appear to have given up on joining the Allawi coalition and are discussing a separate slate. National Democratic Party leader Abid Faisal al-Sahlani, who won a single seat in the January elections, told PolOff October 23 that Allawi had essentially rebuffed his efforts to unite. Sahlani said he had sought out a partnership with Allawi that would draw together exclusively liberal, democratic figures. Instead, he lamented, Allawi had worked to bring together an amalgam of Islamists, nationalists, and communists who are not united by any single vision. Sahlani is forming a competing group with what he described as an alliance of alienated and uncompromising liberals. He said that group would include Baghdad leaders included Provincial Council chairman Mazin Makiya, Karada District Council Chairman Muhammad Rubai'e, former Shia General Tawfiq al-Yasiri, and moderate cleric Ayad Jamal al-Din.

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